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AUTHOR Fischer, Bob; Hamburg, Dave
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ABSTRACT

This study describes a recruiting method designed to increase the number of students involved in beginning band. The targeted population consisted of fifth and sixth grade students in a growing urban community in the Midwest. Evidence for the existence of the problem included numerical data and surveys. Analysis of probable causes was evidenced by data indicating many students were not involved following previous recruitment practices. Teachers reported apathy and lack of information as possible reasons for non-involvement. A review of suggested solution strategies combined with an analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of three categories of intervention: communication of the recruiting process to involve student interest and parent involvement, use of peer modeling and relevant music arrangements to motivate students to enroll in the band program, and dissemination of information about and use of economic strategies designed to help students of all economic strata have an opportunity to participate in a beginning band program. The researchers based the interventions on the three major categories of communication, motivation, and economics. Communication was enhanced with meetings and letters before and after the instrument tryouts. Motivation was enhanced by increased exposure to enjoyable and familiar music performed by upper level groups. Economic solutions included low- or no-cost rentals from the school. Although the results of the intervention indicated a slight decrease in the percentage of students joining the program, classroom teachers indicated a possible reason for low participation may have been due to higher than normal percentage of "low achieving" students in the targeted class. (Contains 3 tables and 17 references.) (Author/BT)

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IMPROVING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN BEGINNING BAND PROGRAMS THROUGH THE USE OF EFFECTIVE RECRUITING TECHNIQUES

Bob Fischer
Dave Hamburg

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & SkyLight

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This project was approved by

John B. Mahaffie, Ed.D.
Advisor

H. Nancy Frakes, Ph.D.
Advisor

Beverly Gulley
Dean, School of Education

Title: Improving student participation in beginning band programs through the use of effective recruiting techniques
Authors: Robert Fischer, Dave Hamburg
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ABSTRACT

This study describes a recruiting method designed to increase the number of students involved in beginning band. The targeted population consisted of fifth and sixth grade students in a growing urban community in the Midwest. Evidence for the existence of the problem included numerical data and surveys.

Analysis of probable causes was evidenced by numerical data indicating many students were not involved following previous recruitment practices. Teachers reported apathy and lack of information as possible reasons for non-involvement.

A review of solution strategies suggested by cited authors, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of three categories of intervention: Communication of the recruiting process to improve student interest and parent involvement; use of peer modeling and relevant music arrangements to motivate students to enroll in the band program; dissemination of information about, and use of economic strategies designed to help students of all economic strata have an opportunity to participate in a beginning band program.

The researchers based the interventions on the three major categories of communication, motivation, and economics. Communication was enhanced with meetings and letters before and after the instrument tryouts. Motivation was enhanced by increased exposure to enjoyable and familiar music performed by upper level groups. Economic solutions included low or no cost rentals from the school. Although the results of the intervention indicated a slight decrease in the percentage of students joining the program, classroom teachers indicated a possible reason for low participation may have been due to higher than normal percentage of "low achieving" students in the targeted class.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

A high percentage of talented students in the targeted fifth and sixth grade classes were not receiving the benefits of beginning band instruction which, according to numerous studies, include self-confidence, self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, and self-expression. Evidence for the existence of the problem included anecdotal records, survey results, and teacher observation.

Local Setting

There were two targeted schools which were in two different school districts. School A had 291 students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade. The student population was 88% Caucasian and 12% African-American. The student attendance rate was 94%, and the mobility rate was 23%. School A's enrollment included 44% low income families including 113 students (39%) who received free lunch and 15 students (5%) who received reduced rate lunch.

School A included 22 certified staff members whose average experience in the field of teaching was 22 years. Among them were 15 classroom teachers, two special education teachers, a Title I teacher, a physical education specialist, and a music specialist. The educational level of the faculty included sixteen teachers with bachelor's degrees and twelve with master's degrees. The school employed one full-time principal. Classified staff included a secretary, one building manager, one half-time nurse, one reading aide, one library aide, two full-time and one half-time special education aides, one Title I aide, two custodians, and five cafeteria workers.

The targeted school building A was a two-story brick building which was constructed in 1971. It was handicap-accessible and it received air-conditioned in 1999. Facilities included 21 classrooms, a gym/cafeteria, and one classroom which was used as a computer lab. School A participated in a school-wide Title I program, and all first grade students received direct reading instruction. All fifth grade students participated in the Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE) program, and each classroom had community volunteers instructing students using the Junior Achievement Program. Gifted instruction was provided by an itinerant teacher. There was a teacher's assistance program in place to help teachers solve problems and meet the needs of children in their classrooms.

The district was comprised of a high school, two junior high schools, 12 grade schools, an alternative school, and an interdistrict preschool. The district included approximately 7,000 students with a teaching staff of 430 for a pupil/teacher ratio of 19 : 1. The average expenditure per student in the district was $5,867. The teaching staff's average experience level was 15 years, and its ethnicity was 91% Caucasian, 8% African-American, and 1% Hispanic. The ethnicity of the district's students was 63% Caucasian, 31% African-American, 6% Hispanic and 7% Asian. Among concerns in the school district were school security, student distribution between schools, and the possibility of changing to an extended-year calendar.

Community Setting

The community in which school A was located had a population of 40,680, of which 51% were female and 49% male. It had a prosperous economy indicated by a 6% unemployment rate. The largest employment opportunities available included agricultural equipment manufacturing, footwear production, insurance sales, and food processing. The city's ethnicity was 79% Caucasian, 18% African-American, 3% Hispanic and 1% Asian. The average age was 34 years and the average annual household income was $27,200.

School B had 342 students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade. The student population was 48% African-American, 43% Caucasian, 6% biracial, and 3% Hispanic. The student attendance rate was 91%. This school was unique in that it did not allow students to enroll after the start of the school year. Outward mobility rate was one percent. School B's enrollment included 194 students (57%) receiving free or reduced lunch.

Employed at school B were a principal, 26 certified staff, 10 non-certified staff, 3 custodians, 3 kitchen staff, a part time nurse, a librarian, and a Title I reading specialist. The educational level of the faculty included 60% at the bachelor's degree level and 40% with a master's degree or greater.

School B was a two-story brick building which was constructed in 1939. It included 20 classrooms, a gymnasium, and a 375 seat auditorium. It was a fundamental school and drew from the entire district population. It provided many programs including Drug Awareness and Resistance Education (DARE), DISTAR (phonics), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), instrumental music, science club, Dads Club, and was awarded the state First In The Nation In Excellence (FINE) award in 1995.

School B was located in the inner city area of a large metropolis in the eastern region of the state. The entire school district included 3 high schools, 6 middle schools, 23 elementary schools, 1 early learning center, and 2 alternative education centers. Total student enrollment was 17,366 with 2,366 certified and classified employees. Ethnicity was 28% minority and 72% non-minority. The student drop-out rate was 3%.

The targeted school districts were located in a large metropolis which was divided by a major river. During earlier eras it was a large Native American settlement, a major step in the spread of jazz music, and the nation's center for agricultural equipment manufacturing. Three four-year colleges were located within the region, and it had many entertainment and cultural choices

available including a civic arena, museums, and a zoo, as well as various sports teams, drama, and musical events. There were three major hospitals and two airports in the area. Major concerns for the region were dealing with the positive and negative aspects of gambling, reviving the downtown areas, and developing new retail areas.

National Context

Lack of participation in school instrumental music programs is of national concern to parents, music teachers, and school officials because of the many intrinsic benefits which include building self-esteem and providing mental and physical discipline. The importance of seeking effective strategies to involve students in instrumental music programs is of paramount importance.

"The study of a musical instrument offers so many benefits to the student that every child should have the opportunity" (The Music Achievement Council, 1986, p. 17). Building self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment are among the major benefits of participation in a band program identified by parents and former band members. Students involved in the study of a musical instrument develop greater responsibility, self-confidence, coordination, mental and physical discipline, dexterity and self-expression.

From a survey given to band members, parents of band members, band directors, and music dealers, Brown (1994) identified twelve benefits that occur when students participate in a band program. Of primary importance to directors and students was that participation in a band program contributed to a more well-rounded education for students. Parents and music dealers indicated that membership in a band organization helped build social skills, creativity, and communication. Results also concluded that an instrumental music program provided an improved quality of life and that it helped in developing responsibility and a sense of self-discipline (Brown, 1994).

Austin (1990) determined that there was a positive relationship between self-esteem and

music participation. If high self-esteem was a byproduct of participation in music, it could be concluded that music participation could result in increased positive self-esteem among students. He also found that at-risk students' self-concept could be positively affected through music participation.

Participation in school instrumental music programs provides many benefits for students including emotional and intellectual enhancement. Too many parents do not enroll their children in music programs for reasons including economics, time constraints, and lack of information.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Evidence of the Problem

A major concern of music educators is the number of students who do not receive the benefits of instrumental music instruction. Lautzenheiser (1993) stated that music participation enhances problem-solving, teamwork, goal-setting, self-expression, coordination, memory skills, self-confidence and esteem, concentration, and poise. In addition to these, Granlie (2000) included association with an outstanding peer group, participating in an intense intellectual exercise, and gaining group identification. He also mentioned that in a band situation, nobody is sitting on the bench, and everyone is having fun. Prentice (1994) included learning perseverance among the benefits of participation in a school instrumental music program, and Bushman (1997) added the benefits of mental and physical discipline. President Clinton (as cited in MENC, 2000) said, "Music is about communication, creativity, and cooperation, and by studying music in school, students have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives, and experience the world from a new perspective" (p.4).

Former President Gerald Ford (as cited in MENC, 2000) stated,

> Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them - a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement. The future of our nation depends on providing our children with a complete education that includes music

(p.4).

A survey of band directors from area schools and schools from other states indicated a large number of students not receiving the benefits of participation in a school band program (Figure 1). Forty-seven percent of students were participants in the school band program at the national level. The targeted schools enrolled more students in beginning band than the regional schools, but all were lower than the national average.

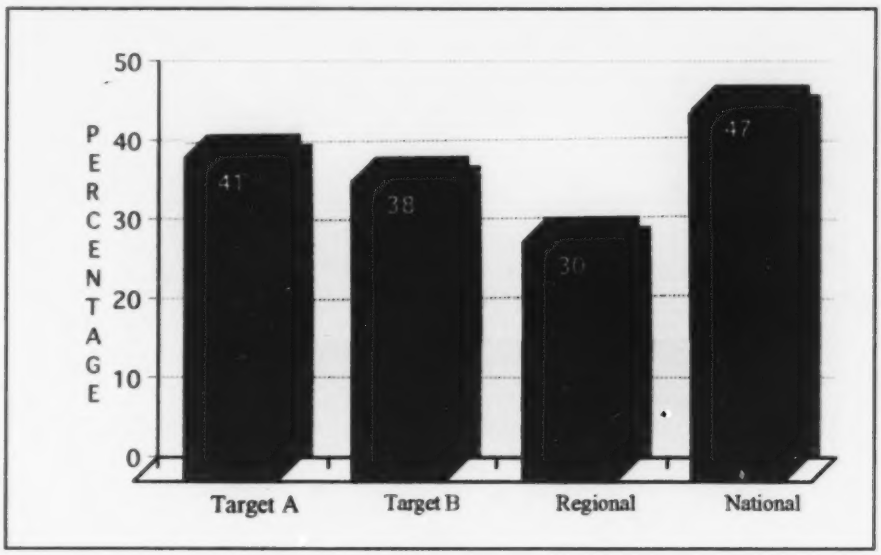

Figure 1. Average percentage of beginning band students in targeted local, regional, and national schools in 1999.

Anecdotal records from the targeted schools showed the low percentage of students participating in the beginning band program compared to the total number of students in the targeted class (Figure 2). The average percentage of participation in school A over the three year period was 33 %, while the average percentage at school B was 37 %. These percentages were lower than the national average of 47 %.

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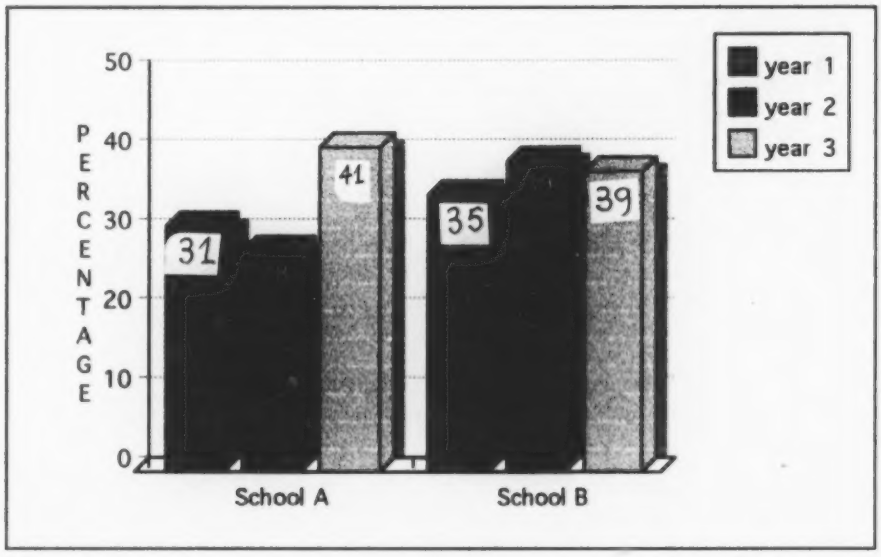

Figure 2. Percentage of students in beginning band at targeted schools from 1997 to 1999

Probable Causes

Lack of communication with parents was evident at both targeted schools. A recurring comment received from parents of non-participating students was that they did not receive enough information about the beginning band program. Parents said that, with a sufficient amount of information, some of these students may have joined the band. Most parents preferred direct communication with the band director, rather than receiving letters delivered by their children, because some children failed to make the deliveries.

Students' lack of motivation to begin instrumental music instruction was a limiting factor in the size of the music program. Students expressed misconceptions about the band program such as uninteresting music, time commitment, and degree of effort required to succeed, which influenced their decision not to participate.

Parents and students indicated concerns about the monetary costs involved in participating in the band program. A common misconception was that instruments had to be paid for in full

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before instruction began. The total cost of owning an instrument can dissuade some parents from allowing their children to participate in the band program.

Many issues raised by directors concerning the amount of time available for band participation included conflicts with sports, other classes, and school activities. A related issue was that music consumed too much of a student's time (Music Achievement Council, 1986). Janzen (1985) stated that in some cases a child's time energies are overdiversified meaning that some children are involved in so many non-school activities that it is detrimental to their mental and physical health.

Brown (1994) indicated that peer pressure could be a negative influence on participation if socially prominent students are not members of the band. Students at beginning band age are very impressionable, and subject to peer approval or disapproval, which can easily affect participation in a group activity such as band.

Many students and parents are concerned about the cost of obtaining a musical instrument. They often select an instrument based on price, instead of personal preference (Fraedrich, 1997). Some parents have the misconception that school music instruction will be an additional cost. Families in economically depressed areas are most affected by monetary concerns of band participation.

Evidence has been established to show the wide variety of benefits experienced by students participating in an instrumental music program. The importance of participation in school music programs which can lead to lifelong learning has been voiced by our nation's leaders including two presidents. Additional evidence showed three major reasons for low participation rates in beginning band programs. These reasons were a lack of information being provided to parents and students, a lack of student motivation to join the program, and misconceptions about the monetary costs involved in band participation.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

A large percentage of students do not participate in school band. This is of critical importance because of the many benefits provided by a school instrumental music program. Among those benefits are self-discipline achieved by diligent practice techniques, self-esteem gained through both individual and group proficiency, and higher academic scores.

Lack of information to parents regarding benefits, dynamics, and logistics is one cause of non-participation in band programs (Brown, 1994). According to Lautzenheiser (1993), a successful communication network is essential. Lautzenheiser wrote:

> So many potentially strong musicians have been lost because of incomplete communication concerning the beginning band program. The chances of recruiting these children at a later time are minimal. The social and educational implications of starting band with their classmates highlights an even greater urgency in making absolutely certain they have every opportunity to say YES to band during this first recruitment venture. Therefore, every feasible effort must be directed to a successful communication network (p.11).

Effective communication with parents should include an initial informational document detailing introductory information, benefits of participation, a statement about parental involvement and support, teacher expectations, rehearsal times, and other aspects of the band program (Music Achievement Council, 1986). Pearson (1993) and Lautzenheiser (1993)

suggested sending a letter to parents one week before recruiting day, and another letter to be sent home the day of the parent meeting. According to Fraedrich (1997), the initial parent letter should include information on the role of the band in the curriculum, description of the band program, information about instrument rental, and information about parents' meetings.

Face-to-face meetings with parents are essential to build good communication. Prentice (1994) suggested an informational parent meeting. Instrument demonstration, selection, rental information, responsibilities of students and parents, and time for questions should be included in the initial meeting (Cowing, 2000).

A recruitment time line should be established and implemented (The Music Achievement Council, 1986, and Fraedrich 1997). Essential elements of the time line should include informing students, parents, and school personnel; building student interest; assessing the students; equipping the students; sustaining student interest; and providing satisfying musical experiences.

Lack of effective communication with students and parents is a common fault of ineffective recruiting programs. This can be easily remedied by providing detailed mailings and meetings, and by having the meetings organized in a logical manner. The information provided should include facts about the logistics of the program as well as the many intrinsic benefits of participation in a band program.

Competition for a student's time at this age level is important considering all of the choices that are available. Janzen (1985) stated that there is not enough time in the daily schedule for all of the endeavors that a student and his/her parents may choose to pursue. In addition to being encouraged to join the band program, students are often subjected to pressure from athletic coaches, school patrons, relatives, and friends to participate in other activities. Yearbook, newspaper, drama, and other school activity sponsors are also competing for students' valuable time.

The influence of peers, poor image of the beginning band program, and students' dislike for the type of music being played can also be a significant factors in a student's decision to join band (Brown, 1994). If potential beginning band students feel that their efforts will not be recognized by their peers, they may lose their interest in joining the program (Music Achievement Council, 1986).

Duitman (2000) suggested that band instruction take place during the school day, which should help alleviate fears about the amount of time involved. He also advocated scheduling band time so that it does not interfere or compete with recess or other extracurricular activities.

According to beginning band students at Black Mountain Middle School in San Diego, CA, participation in band provided a sense of accomplishment through hard work and commitment. They also commented on the joy that music has brought to their lives (Hoffman, 1995). Pearson (1993) suggested that experienced band members speak to the recruiting class, expressing these thoughts to them. He also suggested that second or third year band members present a concert to the recruiting class as a demonstration of their support of the band program. Renner (2000) recommended bringing the high school band in for a demonstration convocation just before instrument tryouts. This helps build the excitement and get students thinking about joining the program.

Effective use of time management is necessary to alleviate student fears concerning the amount of time required by participation in the instrumental music program. Offering band programs during the school day will eliminate conflicts with after-school activities. Having second and third year band students perform as a group and demonstrate individual instruments provides a motivating model for the targeted beginning band class. An even more powerful motivation occurs when these experienced band students verbally express their thoughts about the enjoyment and the benefits that they receive from participation in band.

Participation in a band program requires a monetary commitment to acquire an instrument and accessories. According to Brown (1994) the cost of participation in a band program is the primary reason given by non-participating students and their parents for their non-involvement in the program. Boyle, DeCarbo, and Jordan (1995) also found that the cost of obtaining an instrument is a limiting factor in the decision to participate.

Fraedrich (1997) suggests educating potential band parents about instrument acquisition strategies at the first parent meeting. When parents are informed about financial arrangements, such as rent-to-own, purchasing second-hand instruments, and low-cost rental of school-owned instruments, the cost of obtaining an instrument is not so foreboding.

In cases where family economics prevent instrument procurement through traditional channels, some schools offer instrument rentals at low cost. Perkins-Bosarge (2000) presented as an example of low-cost, school-assisted instrument rentals, a New York State school which offers school-owned instruments at $1.00 to $15.00 yearly. Most schools own larger, more expensive instruments such as the tuba, baritone, and french horn which are intended for low-cost rental (Fraedrich, 1997).

It is understandable that parents of a prospective band student would experience trepidation when first confronted with the cost of a band instrument purchase, and that concern may cause them to decline their child's participation in the band program. Effective communication with parents through meetings and mailings about how best to obtain an instrument is essential to prevent misconceptions about the costs involved in obtaining an instrument.

To increase the number of students receiving the benefits of band participation the obstacles to student participation need to be addressed. Better communication can be achieved through meetings, and mailings to parents explaining the benefits and logistics of the program. Following a logical and proven sequence of recruitment should increase student participation.

To increase students' motivation to join the program, performances by, and interaction with second and third year band students can be utilized. A demonstration concert by an upper level ensemble performing music that is familiar and attainable by the targeted recruiting class can be a powerful motivational tool. To alleviate potential conflicts with other activities, band instruction should be scheduled during the school day.

Economical concerns of potential band parents can be addressed by better communication. Usually these concerns are largely unfounded and based on lack of information. Parents should be advised of all the options and assistance available prior to making any decisions regarding their child's participation.

Project Objectives and Processes

Taking into consideration the many strategies available from which to design an effective plan of action to promote increased numbers of participants in beginning band, members of this research team concluded that their approach would encompass a combination of diverse strategies. Teachers would use a variety of recruitment strategies including improved communication, motivation, and economic solutions. Teachers would also use effective student assessment techniques designed to target a higher level of student success.

As a result of improved parent and student communication, greater numbers of students and parents will have a better understanding of the school band program. This understanding will produce greater numbers of students joining the band program. This will be assessed by anecdotal records and student surveys. In order to accomplish this objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Create a survey for band directors to ascertain proven effective recruiting techniques.
2. Design initial information letter outlining the recruitment process, along with the benefits of participation in an instrumental music program.
3. Host an informational /instructional meeting for parents and students.

4. Develop and implement a student instrument tryout assessment tool.

As a result of increased exposure to music performances, and to attractive music selections arranged for the beginner, the targeted students will have a better understanding of the enjoyment of band participation, and will be more highly motivated to join band. This will be measured by teacher observation and student surveys. In order to accomplish this objective the following processes are necessary:

1. Prepare and schedule performances by upper level students.

2. Arrange popular/appropriate music for beginners.

3. Develop a survey to assess student interest.

As a result economic assistance and better communication with parents and music dealers, more students will be able to afford an instrument and be able to join band. This will be measured by observation and parent interviews. In order to accomplish this objective the following processes are necessary:

1. Create and distribute a parent information document explaining instrument acquisition and finance options.

2. Schedule parent interviews for those requesting assistance.

3. Meet with music dealers to establish a variety of monetary strategies.

Project Action Plan

Week 1: Visit target classes and introduce the program.

Week 2: Demonstration concerts by upper level students including previous beginning group, junior high or high school groups.

Week 3: Begin individual instrument testing.
Send preliminary information to parents.

Week 4: Host parent meeting.
Enroll students.

Week 5: Schedule group and individual lessons.

Week 6: Begin group lessons.

Week 7: Begin individual lessons.

Week 8: Begin full rehearsals.

Weeks 9-12: Introduce appropriately arranged musical selections in full rehearsals.

Methods of Assessment

To evaluate whether the interventions which were implemented improved the percentage of students involved in beginning band, several assessments were utilized. Anecdotal data were acquired from student records which provided statistical evidence of participation rates before and after the interventions. Student surveys were used to discover motivation for participation and reasons for non-participation. Verbal and written communication with parents was used to assess the effectiveness of the information provided by the band teacher.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

A high percentage of talented students in the targeted fifth and sixth grade classes were not receiving the benefits of beginning band instruction which, according to numerous studies, include self-confidence, self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, and self-expression. Evidence for the existence of the problem included anecdotal records on the targeted schools' percentage of school band participation, results from student and band director surveys, and teacher observations. The objective of this project was to design an effective plan of action to promote increased percentages of participants in beginning band. The research team concluded that their approach would encompass a combination of diverse strategies including improved communication, motivation, and economic solutions. Teachers would also use effective student assessment techniques designed to more effectively identify the best instrument for each student, which would enable a higher level of student success.

Prior to this action research project, the recruitment process used by the researchers was unstructured, unresearched, and inconsistent from year to year. Recruitment methods were a result of trial and error, and were modified every year. There was very little information being given to the targeted students or their parents, resulting in confusion about the program and its dynamics which resulted in a low rate of students joining the beginning band program. The previous beginning band members had only two performances during the year, and only one of

them was at their home school where the rest of the student body (including the next year's targeted class) could see them.

National and regional band directors were surveyed to determine what characteristics were common to successful instrumental music recruitment programs. Items included were participation percentages, non-participation factors, and specific details regarding segments of the recruiting process. Descriptions of most effective methods of recruitment were given along with overall descriptions of the recruiting process. Student surveys were given to all students in the targeted schools participating classes. Surveys given to students who were participating in band included questions addressing the reasons for joining, at what point in the recruiting process they decided to join, and the reason for their choice of instrument. Surveys given to non-participating students included questions regarding their reasons for non-participation, the point during the recruiting process their decision was made, and factors which could have influenced them to join.

Listed by the responding band directors as the most important factors in their recruiting strategies were: Sending introductory information to all parents, sending followup letters to all parents, presenting a demonstration concert by older students, demonstrating the instruments in an assembly, having student tryouts on instruments, having low-rent or no-rent instruments available for low-income students, using low-rent and no-rent instruments such as baritone, french horn and tuba as incentives to balance the instrumentation, involving the parents as much as possible, and emphasizing the high reputation of the district band program.

Table 1

Band Director Survey Responses

RECRUITMENT FACTORS	PERCENTAGES
Information mailed to all parents (C)	89
Individual instrument tryouts (M)	78
Parent meeting (C)	72
Classroom music teachers use recorders (M)	67
Balancing instrumentation through monetary assistance (E)	67
Low rent/free instruments available (E)	67
Music company assistance (O)	67
Follow up parent letters (C)	61
Demonstration concert by older group (M)	61
Spring recruitment (O)	61
Instruments demonstrated in an assembly (M)	56
Instruments demonstrated in classrooms (M)	56
Written screening test (M)	50
Fall recruitment (O)	50
Older student assistance (M)	39
Head start summer program (O)	33
Parents present during tryouts (O)	33

(C) identifies factors related to communication
(M) identifies factors related to motivation
(E) identifies factors related to economics
(O) identifies other factors

Band director survey results indicated that communication was a primary factor in the recruitment process. Among the factors receiving the highest responses from the band directors included the following which focused primarily on communication with parents: introductory logistical information mailed to all parents (89%), an introductory informational parent meeting (72%), and followup letters being sent to all parents after the student tryouts (61%).

Motivation was also a major concern of the responding band directors. Motivational factors in the recruitment process included the following factors: individual instrument tryouts for all targeted students (78%), a preparation unit on recorder performance by classroom music teachers (67%), a demonstration concert by an older student group (61%), instruments demonstrated in a classroom setting (56%), instruments demonstrated in an assembly setting (56%), a preparatory written screening test given to all targeted students (50%), and an experienced music student used in the demonstration session (39%).

Two economic factors also received responses from a high number of band directors. They included providing low-rent or no-rent instruments to students whose parents could not afford to rent through a music store (67%), and providing low-rent or no-rent instruments such as baritone, french horn, and tuba as a means of balancing the instrumentation in the group (67%).

Since local music stores are involved in most recruiting programs, their survey responses were considered by the researchers with special interest. The items that the music store spokespersons agreed should be included in effective beginning band recruiting programs were a written/listening screening test, information being sent to the parents of all prospective band members, instrument demonstrations in the classrooms, individual tryouts on instruments, an informational meeting for parents, assistance from a music company during the recruiting process, assistance from older students, a demonstration concert from an experienced band, the use of familiar and entertaining music during the demonstration concert, a followup letter sent to

parents after the tryouts, and the use of recorders during classroom music classes. When asked to list the most important aspects of a successful recruiting program, the music store representatives responded that parental involvement and support were essential along with constantly and diligently "selling" the program to the prospective students. They also listed constant support from the general music teachers, and exposure to more experienced groups as an example of the enjoyment that beginning band members can look forward to during their continued participation in the band program.

The final set of surveys was administered to the previous year's targeted class including those who did become members of the band program as well as those who chose not to join. When participating students were asked to identify the reasons why they joined the band program (Table 2), their most frequent responses were that they had wanted to join the group for years (83%), they like the teacher (75%), they want to eventually be in the high school band (71%), the previous year's band looked like it was fun (63%), they enjoyed the selections played by the previous year's beginning band (50%), and the instruments looked great so they wanted to play one (42%). Also included in their reasons were the desire to do things well (42%), comments from previous band members who said it was fun (38%), and the fact that they were initially uninterested, but changed their minds after they had a chance to try an instrument (25%). When asked at what point during the recruitment process they made their decision to join, 42% said that they had decided before the instrument demonstrations while 25% said that it was not until after they tried an instrument.

Table 2

Band Member Survey Responses

INFLUENCED DECISION TO JOIN	PERCENTAGE
I have wanted to play an instrument for years	83
I like the teacher	75
I wanted to be in the high school band	71
Last year's band looked like fun	63
The songs played by last year's group were good	50
I like doing things well	42
The instruments looked great, so I wanted to play one	42
One of my friends was in last year an said it was fun	38
After trying an instrument I wanted to join	25
My friends joined so I decided to also	21
My classroom teacher encouraged me to join	12.5
My parents said I had to join.	0

When non-participating students were asked about the factors that influenced their decision not to join the beginning band program (Table 3), their most frequent responses were that they did not have the time (56%), they were too involved in sports (44%), the instruments looked too hard to play (44%), the cost was too high (34%), and their parents did not know anything about the program (33%). Other responses included that their parents said they could not join (22%), the previous year's group did not look like it was fun (22%), and that they did not like the songs that the previous year's group played (19%).

Table 3

Non-Band Member Survey Responses

INFLUENCED DECISION NOT TO JOIN	PERCENTAGE
I do not have the time	56
I am too involved in sports	44
The instruments look too hard to play	44
It costs too much	34
My parents didn't know anything about it	33
My parents said I could not join	22
Last year's band did not look like it was fun	22
I did not like the songs the band played last year	19
Friend in last year's band said it was not fun	13
My friend/s did not join, so I did not join	9
My classroom teacher discouraged me	0
I do not like the teacher	0

Interpretation of Survey Results

According to the research collected from the various surveys and interviews, one of the initial factors in recruiting a high percentage of beginning band members is the reputation of the overall band program. If the high school and junior high programs are strong and highly visible in the community, beginning students are more likely to want to be a part of it. In all situations, the targeted students need to be exposed to the school system's upper level groups as much as possible, and they need to perceive band participation as being interesting and enjoyable. To accomplish this, the students should be encouraged to attend upper level band concerts,

competitions, halftime performances, basketball appearances, jazz band, appearances and any other opportunities there are to see students who are having a good time participating in band. For those who are unable or uninspired to see these types of performances, upper level bands should be brought into the grade schools for performances. This has the added benefit of exposing the groups to the entire student body instead of just the targeted class, and the concept of how enjoyable band participation can be will be ingrained in the minds of all of the school's students.

When participating beginning band students were surveyed as to why they joined band, a high percentage of them responded that they had always wanted to, and this could be a reason for that attitude. A very effective variation to the method of having older groups perform in grade school assemblies is for the older groups to play a selection with which the present beginning class is familiar. The present beginners can join the older students in playing the selection, and not only does it make the present beginners feel great to play with the "big kids," it makes them look great in front of their peers, and it is influential for younger students as they look forward to the day when they will have the chance to play in front of their peers. It is also beneficial for the groups who are performing for the younger students to play selections that their audience is familiar with such as themes from movies and other familiar selections. Involving the audience in the performance by having them sing along or yell in the appropriate places not only makes the performance enjoyable for the performers and audience alike, it is also a great motivator for everyone involved. By the time students reach the grade where they will be recruited for beginning band, they should be highly motivated to do so by the performances of the older groups that they have already seen.

Another method that most band directors use to acclimate the targeted students to the the idea of joining the band program is the recorder unit in the general music classroom. In addition to beginning to foster interest in the band program, this unit begins to get students used to reading

printed notes and coordinating their fingers and embouchures to those notes. This would take place before the main recruiting effort takes place.

As the first step in the formal recruiting process, approximately half of the band directors surveyed use a written/listening test as both a motivational and identification tool. Administered in the general music classroom or during a mini-assembly, this test measures the students' ability to identify differences in pitches, rhythms, melodies, and chords. It is usually administered on audio cassette or videocassette although it is also possible to administer it live on actual band instruments. This has the advantage of giving the targeted students a chance to see and hear the instruments being played. Prerecorded audio and video versions of this test are available through music retailers such as the Conn and Selmer Corporations.

Nearly all surveyed band directors indicated that they send an introductory informational letter to the parents of all prospective band students at this time. The letter includes an overview of the recruiting process and answers most of the questions that a parent might have about the program and the process of enrolling. It also informs the parents about the parent meeting which will be held immediately following individual instrument tryouts.

Prior to actually trying instruments, the targeted students need an opportunity to see the instruments up close and to see them played so they have a chance to decide which instruments they will try when the tryout date arrives. Most band directors advocate either visiting the classrooms or having a mini-assembly for this step. Typically, all of the instruments are displayed and the presenters demonstrate them by explaining how they are played, then by playing a few notes. At this point, an effort can be made to steer students toward instruments that have not been chosen well enough in the past which resulted in unbalanced instrumentation in upper groups. For instance, if the bands have been lacking low brass players, the demonstrator can show how enjoyable these instruments can be by playing familiar melodies. Targeted

students at this point often are trying to decide how hard an instrument is to play, so presenters should be careful not to make playing look difficult at this point. Before leaving the classroom or assembly, the director should give instructions on the steps that will follow in the recruiting process. This is also the point where the introductory information letter should be sent to the parents of all prospective beginners. While some directors send the information sheet home with the students, most report better success by sending the information to the parents.

The next step is the most important one of the entire recruiting process. In this step, students get the chance to actually play the instrument or instruments of their choice. In most cases, at least three or four instructors (or music store helpers) are present and they are each responsible for a group of similar instruments or instrument families. Small groups of students are allowed to rotate through the stations, trying their potential instruments. Instructors show them how to make a sound on the instruments, and even actually play a few notes if there is time. Again, instruments that are needed in the older groups can be emphasized at this time. If a suitable tone cannot be played on an instrument, the instructors can suggest a different instrument to try. Most students are able to play more than one instrument at this point, but they need to pick one that they will be able to play in the beginning band. Students are given an information sheet to take home which explains what instrument they have chosen and what parents need to do to get the student signed up for the beginning band class, which is usually to attend the parent meeting. Motivation is highest at this point, and instructors need to take advantage of it by scheduling the parent meeting as soon as possible. A variation on this method which many directors use is to have short, private appointments including the student and his/her parents during which the instruments are tried and one is chosen. This is an excellent alternative if the time is available because of the increased individual attention given during the instrument selection process, and because of the opportunity to explain the program in person to the parents

and to answer any questions.

Following the instrument selection tryouts, most band directors immediately send a letter to parents explaining the results of the individual instrument tryouts and their recommendations for the instrument that the student will actually play. If the student was able to demonstrate good tone production on more than one instrument during the tryout, the band director will usually suggest the one in which the student was best suited, or will make a suggestion based on the instrumentation needs of the group. Information about the parent meeting is also given again in this letter.

The next step used by most band directors is the parent meeting in which the final decision about participation and instrument selection is confirmed. The meeting is usually held in the evening to accommodate parent schedules and includes the band director, parents, students, and possibly representatives from a local music store. A typical meeting will begin with the director giving an overview of the beginning band program and what it will require from the students and the parents. Information about the equipment that is needed, including the instrument, accessories, and instruction book is covered, and suggestions on where to obtain the equipment are given. Following an opportunity for individual questions to be answered, parents can enroll their child immediately by filling out a confirmation form, or they have the opportunity to witness their child trying the instrument again. Students who missed the initial tryout session can use this time as their initial session. This is usually the last chance for a decision to be made on the choice of instrument, so care must be taken to be sure that the parents, students, and the director are satisfied that the instrument chosen is the correct one. While most parents and students will leave the meeting with their decision made and their participation confirmed, some will need additional time to discuss this decision. In this case, returning the confirmation form later is usually a possibility.

With the formal segment of the recruiting process completed, the last steps before the instruction actually begins are to confirm membership in the class and schedule the instruction. In most cases, there will be some students who plan on participating in the class but did not return their confirmation form. To deal with this situation and to possibly persuade students who are on the brink of joining but have not made a commitment yet, a final classroom visit is usually suggested. However, since getting instruction started quickly is a concern to prevent loss of interest, students should understand that this is their last chance to commit. Since nearly every school district has a different situation for actual beginning band instruction, little consensus could be obtained from surveys and interviews about the best method of instruction scheduling, but most instructors agree that seeing students as often as possible and in the smallest group possible is the ideal situation.

Finally, since most music companies utilize an initial rental period of three months before requiring ongoing payments, most band directors schedule a performance just before that time period expires. Even if this performance involves just playing a few exercises or simple popular melodies, it will allow the beginning band students a chance to participate in the excitement and pride of performing in front of parents and peers before they reach the point where regular payments and a decision on continuing in the program are required.

Explanation of the Intervention

Demonstration performances were the first step in the intervention. Junior high school band members were transported to the grade schools where they performed in an assembly for the entire student body including the targeted class. The music they performed was composed or arranged by the researchers with the intent of providing enthusiastic and familiar selections and demonstrating how enjoyable the band experience could be. At least one of these selections was already being prepared by the present beginning band class at each grade school, so those

members were allowed to join the junior high group in that selection. Not only did this demonstrate to the targeted students how enjoyable band participation could be, it also made the present beginners look very good in front of their peers, encouraging their continued participation. Brief initial information about the upcoming opportunity to join the band program was also mentioned at this assembly. At approximately the same time, classroom music teachers presented a unit of recorder instruction to the targeted class which exposed the students to the concept of reading notes and interpreting them into instrumental performance. They also presented the Selmer listening test to the targeted music class which aided in identifying students with exceptional musical listening ability, and increased the students' interest in the recruiting process.

An initial informational letter was sent to the parents of all targeted students at this time. This letter explained the band program and the recruiting process, and answered many of the questions that the parent of a prospective beginning band student might have had. It also outlined which steps needed to be taken in order for the student to be enrolled in the class, and provided information on how to obtain an instrument.

The researchers' first formal contact with the targeted classes were class visits in which all of the instruments were demonstrated and information was given, including how to hold them, what materials were used in their construction, and how to produce a tone. Specific information was given including advice on how to choose an instrument, how to rent one, and how to convince parents to allow participation. Students were asked to think of two or three instruments that they would like to try, and time was provided for answering questions.

Following the class visits, individual instrument tryouts began in a different room. Trial instruments were displayed on tables in separate corners of the room and at least one tryout facilitator was stationed at each table. Besides the researchers, other instrumental music teachers,

and helpers from local music companies served as tryout facilitators. Groups of approximately five students at a time entered the room, filled out an information sheet and went to the table that held their first choice of instrument. The facilitator described the proper embouchure, and while holding the instrument, aided the student in playing the first note. If the tone was acceptable, the facilitator entered a number 3 next to the instrument on the student's sheet and encouraged the student to try another instrument of his/her choice. If the tone was not acceptable, the facilitator entered a number 1 on the student's sheet and suggested another instrument to try based on the results of the first trial. As each student returned to the classroom, they sent another student for his/her turn at the instrument trial. There was a high degree of motivation during this event as students anxiously compared their chosen instruments with their classmates. Facilitators were also very encouraging during this session, advising the students to inform their parents of their desire to play an instrument. They also mentioned that if the students' parents would not allow them to participate because they could not afford the cost of rental through a music company, the directors would help them find a lower-cost instrument. The director collected the information sheet that was used during the tryout session for record-keeping and later identification of the proper instrument for the student.

The parent meeting was scheduled shortly after the instrument tryout sessions. All of the district's instrumental music teachers were present and each was assigned a job. The high school band teacher met the parents at the door, had them sign in, and fill out the student information section of the confirmation sheet. The other instrumental teachers (with help from music store personnel) each manned a table of instruments similar to the setup at the initial instrument tryouts, and they spoke to the student and the parents after they had signed in. In most cases, the student demonstrated playing the instrument for the parents who were generally very impressed. In some cases, the student tried a few instruments before making the final decision.

The teacher then made sure that the parent understood the dynamics of the band program, and offered suggestions on how to find an instrument. Music store representatives were present to explain the rental plan to those parents who were interested. The final step in the process was for the students to sign their name on a large sheet of poster paper that had a number of lines under each instrument name. They were then enthusiastically congratulated for being a member of the band and given a band sticker before leaving.

Since this recruitment process took place in the spring, the final step before the students left for the summer break was to visit the classrooms and confirm membership in the group. Students who said they were going to be in the group but had not returned a confirmation sheet had their parents called to confirm membership. Final instructions were given on how to find an instrument, then the recruitment process was put on hold until school began in the fall. A head-start band program was held in the summer, but the actual class did not begin until school resumed in the fall.

Shortly after school started in the fall, the directors visited the classroom to confirm membership for the final time, then began scheduling the student lesson times. In an effort to have instructional contact with the students as much as possible, each student was scheduled for a weekly 15 minute individual or semi-private lesson during the school day, a weekly 30 minute sectional lesson during the school day in which all similar instruments met together, and a weekly before-school 30 minute full band rehearsal for all of the band students at that school.

Two students approached the researcher and commented that they could not be in the band because their parents could not afford to rent an instrument. The researcher was able to provide them with school-owned instruments for the cost of $20.00 for the entire year, and they were able to participate.

After the schedule was approved by the classroom teachers, beginning band instruction

began in the third week of school. In the first few lessons, most students were able to play the first five notes. At that point, they were taught a simple piece arranged by the researcher, "We Are, We Are," which is based on the first four descending notes that the students learned. They were delighted that they could play a song that they were familiar with so early in their instruction. Instruction continued with students meeting only in individual and sectional lessons until they were advanced enough to meet in the full band setting. In the fourth week of instruction, full band rehearsals began 30 minutes before the school day began. Students began by playing the first few exercises from their lesson book, then finished with the "We Are" selection that they had practiced in small groups earlier. By ending the full rehearsal with this selection, the band students left with a positive feeling about the rehearsal and the group. Teachers and students who were entering the building also were able to hear them playing a familiar song, and frequently commented to the group on how good they sounded which was great positive reinforcement for them.

The next selection introduced was "Let's Go Band!" which was also arranged by the researchers. It is based on the first five ascending notes that the students learned and again, the students were pleased that they could play a familiar song so early in their instruction.

Instruction continued in the same manner, and as the students prepared for their first performance at the school holiday program, they were introduced to short exercises arranged by the researchers that supplemented the seasonal songs that they were preparing from the lesson book. The more advanced students were able to play the supplements while the students who were not very far advanced could still play the selections from their lesson book. They were also introduced to the researchers' arrangement of "Jingle Bells." As with most of the arrangements, this piece had parts in three levels of difficulty for each instrument. Less advanced students could play the bass line and be successful, more advanced students could play the melody, and the

most advanced students could play the harmony part. All three parts were essential to the arrangement, so no student had to feel discouraged because if they could not play the more advanced parts. The students performed during the holiday program and were very enthused, especially after they heard about the ancient rule that requires band students' parents to provide ice cream for them after every concert.

As instruction progressed and student knowledge and performance ability improved, more of the researchers' arrangements were introduced including, "Rock & Roll Part 2," "Theme from the movie, Titanic," and "Land of a Thousand Dances." Then the students progressed to the point that they were ready to be the demonstration group for next year's prospective beginning band students.

Results of the Intervention

Data collected for evaluation of the intervention included the percentage of students participating in the beginning band program as compared to the total number of students in the targeted class. School A had thirteen students enrolled in the program following the intervention for a percentage of 39%. School B had 14 students enrolled for a percentage of 34%. These percentages are actually lower than those from before the intervention. When the researchers asked the classroom teachers what may have caused this unexpected lower percentage, the teachers responded that the targeted classes had a higher-than-normal percentage of "low achieving" students this year. They were actually encouraged by the percentage of students participating in band. Another possible cause of the lower participation percentages may have been economics. Student surveys indicated that not all students were able to afford an instrument, and the teacher-researchers were unable to find a suitable instrument for every child.

Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the data collected from band directors, music store representatives, and

students, the three most important and effective elements of the band recruitment process are motivation, communication, and economics. All three are important, but motivation may be the most crucial of the three because the student is usually the one who makes the initial decision on whether or not to join the band program. Table 2 notes that none of the surveyed students responded that their parents said that they had to join the group.

A recurring comment from the band director and music store representative surveys is that the band program must be "sold" to the students. Since fifth and sixth grade students are not likely to be looking into the future far enough to consider joining the band as a career decision, or as a means of improving their responsibility, self-confidence, coordination, mental and physical discipline, self-expression or self-esteem, a more immediate reason must be given for them to join the group. The factor receiving the highest number of responses from students who are presently band members as to the reasons why they joined the group is that they have wanted to play an instrument for years. This indicates that they have been considering this decision for a long time and that an item that may have affected this decision is exposure to other school groups during their grade school years. This indicates the importance of having older groups (as well as the present beginning band) perform for the entire grade school (and not just the targeted class) as often as possible. The students' second highest response, that they like the teacher, indicates the importance of enthusiasm and having a rapport with the students as attributes of an effective band director.

Another important and immediate set of factors that many students indicate as a reason for their joining the group is that being in band looks like fun, the songs the band plays sound like they are fun, and a friend who is in the group says that it is fun. The indication here is that directors need to make sure that not only is the beginning band an enjoyable experience, but subsequent groups that perform for prospective beginners also need to perform enjoyable songs

for them, and they need to project the attitude that they are enjoying being in band. This is one of the reasons that the researcher is arranging familiar selections such as "Rock and Roll Part 2," "Land of a Thousand Dances," "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Theme from Titanic," and even Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" for beginning and intermediate bands. One of the most successful selections for beginning band concerts is the researcher's arrangement of "Let's Go Band" in which the entire audience shouts the name of the band at the end of the selection.

The second most important factor in recruiting is communication. The students need to be informed of what beginning band participation is like including choosing an instrument, learning to read and play notes, and what participation will be like in future years. The first meeting with the targeted class should be the time when these questions are anticipated and answered. The director should try to imagine what questions and/or fears that a potential beginning band student might have and address them at this meeting. Many students feel that they do not know anything about what all those lines and dots mean, that they have no idea how to make a sound on an instrument, and that both concepts will be too hard for them to learn. The director should be thorough in showing how easy it is to produce a tone on all of the instruments being demonstrated, and how easy it is to learn one note, then two or three, and then being able to play a song (like "We Are, We Are") after learning only three or four notes. Communication with parents is also very important at this stage. Although a few students have probably already told their parents that they want to be in band, most have not seriously considered it until now, and their parents need to be informed about all aspects of beginning band participation (especially the cost) on or before the day that their child comes home in an excited state proclaiming that they really, really want to be in band! An introductory letter should be mailed to parents of all students in the targeted class before the instrument tryouts take place so they are prepared to help their children make the decision about participation when they come home with the good

news. Parents especially need to be informed about the monetary cost of band participation. The initial cost of buying a band instrument may seem astounding, but it is much easier to take when rental is considered instead of an outright purchase.

The monetary commitment is the third most important factor in beginning band recruiting. Band instruments are not inexpensive and a parent's first exposure to the full retail price could be enough to prevent the student's participation in the course. The potential students themselves might feel that the monetary commitment is too much for their parents to make and may decline their interest in participation because of it. In one of the earliest meetings or mailings, students and parents need to be informed about all of the possibilities of procuring an instrument. Directors should inform parents that band instruments are sometimes available through friends or neighbors, through newspaper ads, or even through the Internet on programs such as eBay. In this case they should be informed that there is usually no guarantee on the instrument and it should be checked by the director before being used by the student. Parents should also be informed that most instruments for beginning band students are rented, not fully purchased, and that most music stores will apply the rental payments to the purchase price for a prescribed amount of time. In the case of families that cannot afford the cost of renting an instrument, directors should try to build up an inventory of school-owned instruments that can be provided temporarily at low or no cost to families whose children could not participate in band without them. Some school districts ask their families to donate instruments that are not being used anymore to the school specifically for this purpose. Finally, parents should be reminded that band instruction is being provided entirely free-of-charge through the school (in most cases). When considering that from one to three or even four lessons, sectionals, or rehearsals per week are included in school band instruction, it should be considered as quite a bargain.

The researchers feel that considering all of the benefits that band instruction provides for

students, the joy of participation, and the ease of learning to play an instrument, every student in the targeted beginning band class should be involved in the band program. That is their goal during each year's recruitiment process, and they will continue each year to analyze and improve their recruiting procedures with that goal in mind.

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